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ABSTRACT

This paper considers how well today's young adolescents are prepared for their future roles as citizens, noting that the public schools have a unique opportunity to positively affect their students' civic knowledge, values, and behaviors. The paper contends that recent research suggests that the next generation of citizens may lack the knowledge, attitudes, values, and social awareness that were once viewed as crucial. It discusses what civic literacy means and outlines the basic requirements for citizenship. The paper advocates using an interdisciplinary civics curriculum to teach students how to grasp the essential elements of a problem or issue, consider the consequences of various alternatives, and make decisions that are based on a concern for society as well as individual self interest. The paper contends that the educational system and curricula must do a better job of helping students to think critically, resolve conflicts, cooperate, communicate, and gather and synthesize information. Eight recommended curriculum goals are outlined and then discussed in detail. The paper also suggests nine effective instructional strategies to help ensure the success of the civics course. According to the paper, students who complete such a multidisciplinary course should achieve a substantial number of learning goals. For example, they should know the historical foundations and the structure of U.S. political, legal, economic, and social systems; they should understand basic societal goals and values; and they should have improved attitudes toward democracy and their future roles as citizens. Contains 14 references, and 2 lesson plans with student handouts. (BT)

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MAKING CONNECTIONS: INTERDISCIPLINARY LESSONS TO PREPARE TOMORROW'S CITIZENS

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Paper presented at the
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MAKING CONNECTIONS: INTERDISCIPLINARY LESSONS TO PREPARE TOMORROW'S CITIZENS

Each year, nearly one million eighth- and ninth-grade students in our public schools enroll in civics courses. The large number of students participating in these courses--many of which are required by individual states--underscores an important fact about civic education in America. As parents and educators, we know that adolescents learn about good citizenship in a number of different settings. At the same time, however, we also rely heavily on our schools to help prepare young people for their adult civic responsibilities and the one course focused on citizenship is civics.

Traditionally, civics courses have borne most of the responsibility for preparing young people for their future roles as citizens. Needless to say, we have placed enormous responsibilities on our social studies curricula, and on civics courses in particular. Over the past 20 years, however, the major support for that teaching--stable families with commonly shared values--has gradually eroded. After World War II, there was confidence that most American families held common civic beliefs that they passed on to their children. Now as we approach the 21st century, our society and its international context are no longer the same. Major changes in American culture and demographics have taken place, and our confidence in a commitment to common civic values no longer exists. If asked, we might all agree on at least some of the qualities of a good citizen; however, young people are finding it more and more difficult to apply straightforward, simple values to a complex and shifting society.

The Civic Ignorance of Our Youth

Early adolescence is the time when individuals begin to develop a perception of the world and a core of ideals that include political attitudes and principles. When they are about 12 or 13, young people start to show an increasing interest in society and politics and a type of civic morality begins to emerge. During this phase of cognitive and social development, they continue to absorb enormous amounts of social and political information from their families, peers, schools, and the media. They observe, they read, they listen, and they adopt behaviors and values that others model for them. Having passed through childhood, they gradually develop new cognitive abilities that allow them to move away from the egocentric, personalized interpretations of social and political organizations that they held as children. In Piagetian terms, their thinking becomes formal operational. They are increasingly able to handle abstract concepts and diverse perspectives and, in the process, slowly develop their own political philosophy--one that reconciles their changing concepts of self and of society.

Our public schools have a unique opportunity to positively affect students' civic knowledge, values, and behaviors at about this age. Ideally, what students learn in school will be the impetus for lifelong civic commitment and growth. Unfortunately, recent research studies suggest that our next generation of citizens may well lack the knowledge, attitudes, values, and social awareness that our ancestors viewed as crucial. While none of us want to imagine that we are depriving our children of the essential social and civic tools they will need as adults, we may be doing just that.

What does civic literacy mean? One component is a basic knowledge of our history, our form of government, our economic and legal systems, and all of the civic procedures that allow us to call ourselves a civilized people. Tests of the economic, political, legal, and historic knowledge of public school students have provided alarming statistics about the civic literacy of our young people. If scores on such tests are any indication, we have been woefully deficient in providing even this basic knowledge to our students. We must all become concerned when 40 percent of high school seniors cannot give even an approximate date for the signing of the Constitution. Or

when almost 80 percent of our seniors incorrectly believe that the President can declare laws unconstitutional. Or when the average score on a national test of economic knowledge is slightly better than chance.

Our traditional social studies curriculum can give students information; however, it seems to have little effect on the other components of civic literacy, namely values, attitudes, and behaviors. In addition to the evidence of increasing prejudice and intolerance among young people, social researchers point out that indifference, amorality, privatism, and materialism among our youth have reached alarming levels. Certainly, we must provide students with knowledge and information; however, these are obviously not enough to produce responsible citizens and civically literate adults.

In the 1990's and beyond, one of our most critical responsibilities as educators, parents, and responsible adults will be to provide more than information to adolescents. With our new forms of media and technologies, we are all exposed to more information each day than we can reasonably process. If we are to continue to espouse certain ideals for our citizens and our republic, we must be able to reconcile these ideals with the world that students see and experience every day. Otherwise, our students will laugh at our notions of justice, equality, and freedom. We must be prepared for our students' expressions of cynicism and disinterest, and we must find ways to counter such negative attitudes.

The Basic Requirements for Citizenship

We may think of citizenship as the lifelong exercise of many different civic skills and capabilities. Most of us would agree that our civic duties include obeying the law, paying our taxes, voting, serving jury duty, educating our children, and actively promoting the welfare of our country and our community.

When we teach our students about our history and civic structures, or about our economy and our legal system, we are trying to give them knowledge that they can then use to guide them in these activities. For example, how can voters judge the reasonableness of a new tax if they do not first understand what a tax is? And how can they support the Bill of Rights if they have no idea what that document looks like? This knowledge should not be limited, as it often is in traditional civics curricula, to government and politics. We must also attempt to put students in touch with their cultural heritage and the ecosystem we live in. If we are to help develop future policy makers, we must give young people a basic understanding of our economic, legal, and social systems as well.

No matter how well we teach students <u>about</u> our history and civic structures, however, they will need more than knowledge to function as responsible citizens. Without an ability to make sense of facts--to recognize patterns and form judgments--they can hardly make wise decisions about themselves or their communities. They will have to put new facts and information into proper contexts, see relationships between principles and events, and integrate concepts and facts related to our economic, social, legal, and political systems. In sum, responsible citizenship will require that they blend facts with cognitive abilities and attitudes that they then demonstrate in their behavior.

As we are all aware, an ability to act and a willingness to act are entirely different things. Thus, another essential component of civic literacy is a commitment to the values underlying these systems. As we have seen, America in the 21st century will be much more diverse and complex than it is today. Perhaps more than ever in our history, our citizens will be expected to accommodate group and individual differences and demonstrate the democratic values of tolerance and pluralism. Our citizens will need to do more than just understand such principles as majority rule with minority rights; they will need the will to personalize these values and demonstrate them in their civic behaviors. Will they understand and value our legal principles and our limits to

freedom? Will they demonstrate the attitudes of cooperation and fair play? Will they display character and produce high-quality work? Will they demand that others do the same? Somehow, we must ensure that they do. Such values and attitudes will act as a powerful force to keep our increasingly pluralistic society intact.

A final--and crucial--component is involvement. Good citizens put their civic principles and values into practice. They vote in local and national elections, try to stay informed on important issues, act responsibly toward the environment, and perform various types of community service. Instead of simply reacting emotionally to events, they interpret and evaluate issues, consider alternatives and different perspectives, and make reasoned decisions. They participate in the decision-making processes at both the local and national level. They see citizenship not only in terms of themselves and their legal rights; they also willingly accept the responsibilities that go along with those rights.

What Our Schools Can Do

Numerous research studies--and our own good sense--tell us that our school and classroom environments have a large impact on young adolescents' behaviors and attitudes. Most young adolescents view school as an important part of their lives. It is a general perception that our schools have a powerful social influence on students, second only to parents in their effect.

Unfortunately, our instructional influence on students' democratic attitudes appears to be minimal. Several reviews of the literature (Ehman, 1980; Leming, 1985) have shown that students' democratic attitudes are unaffected by what they learn in traditional classrooms. When their attitudes are affected, the causes seem to be the informal elements of the school setting, such as school and classroom climate, extra-curricular activities, and participation in decision-making (Banaszak, Hartoonian, & Leming, 1992). Schools that encourage students to participate in decision-making seem to positively affect students' political attitudes.

Our traditional civics curriculum is, of course, a part of this instructional framework. If we consider research findings like those just cited, we must conclude that civics courses, as good as they are, are not effectively teaching the skills, knowledge, and values that we believe future citizens must have.

What are the skills responsible citizens need? They are many and wide-ranging. The most fundamental, perhaps, is the ability to make rational decisions. Although we can easily identify this skill as important, teachers know that it is not easily taught. An individual's ability to make sound civic decisions requires a number of separate skills, including the ability to gather and process information, analyze data, think critically, take a perspective, communicate and advocate a position, cooperate with others, and persuade.

In our everyday lives, we constantly combine experiences, knowledge, values, and new data as we attempt to cope and function appropriately in our environment. As our environment becomes increasingly complex, our decision-making skills will be stretched well beyond what we can now imagine. As never before, citizens of the 21st century will have to process and synthesize diverse forms of information, recognize cause and effect relationships, use good judgment, cooperate with others, think logically, understand other perspectives, and be willing to participate in the decision-making process. They will need to grasp the essential elements of a problem or issue, consider the consequences of various alternatives, and make decisions that are based on a concern for our society as well as their own self-interest.

Through their formal and informal school learning, our students must develop as many of these skills and abilities as possible. Doing so, however, may seem like a formidable task to most teachers and curriculum leaders. We know we can teach facts, but how do we go beyond rote

learning to analysis, synthesis, and problem-solving? Let's look, for a moment, at what we may do with the "facts" that we teach students. We may use content, for example, to help students:

-Learn to build connections and see relationships

-Recognize that facts are constantly changing

-See cause and effect relationships

-Use different logical patterns

-Recognize and confront bias

-Construct arguments for and against a position or solution

-See different sides of an issue

-Understand what perspectives and world views are

-Link prior knowledge with new information

-Create new knowledge structures

-Gather, analyze, and consider the sources of data

-Recognize valid and invalid reasoning

-Recognize the use and misuse of statistics

-Develop questions and evaluation procedures

-Work cooperatively toward a goal

-Explore the civic environment

Most eighth- and ninth-grade students are capable of learning these skills, and the civics curriculum seems to be the most logical place to teach them. Information relating to our social, economic, legal, and political systems can be combined and used to stimulate such learning.

For example, suppose students were asked to assume different roles in a community faced with ground water pollution. Students will probably feel strongly about this problem, because it is one that they can relate to. A role-play of this type requires that students consider not only data and "facts," but all of the social, economic, legal, and political aspects of the problem. They must also examine their own values and the values of others. For example, how important are the issues of cost, health, convenience, jobs, and natural beauty of the town? What definition of "pollution" do they use? Is water pollution a fact, or simply one interpretation of the data? And who is responsible? The town's citizens, the city government, the principal polluters, or everyone involved? Any policy the students develop will have to reflect an understanding of the town's economic, social, political, and legal structures and limitations.

Young adolescents are able and willing to explore such problems, and the civics curriculum is the natural setting for such exploration. In our traditional civics courses, however, students study each of these systems as a separate entity. They do not consider the interplay of these four systems, nor are they asked to consider problems and make decisions based on integrated knowledge. The organization and structure of our schools, the requirements for teacher certification, and the ways teachers are trained do not encourage such an approach. Our entire

system of education is set up to teach information in discrete and tidy bundles. Students who try to make connections among these disciplines must do so on their own. Is it any wonder that they have poorly defined political values and world views?

While young people are inclined to think about the "here and now," civics courses often focus too much attention on vocabulary-laden facts about our government institutions and their historical contexts. No connection is made among these institutions, the past, and present-day events and problems. Instead, students memorize vocabulary, dates, and facts that have little meaning and significance to their lives. The problems and failings of our systems may be glossed over and the "warts" hidden from view.

Although our social, economic, legal, and political systems are taught as separate entities, in real life they interact in a holistic, dynamic manner that cannot be explained within a single system. Poverty, hunger, pollution, and nuclear energy--along with the more mundane problems of our daily lives--are issues that cannot be addressed by or within one system alone. Inevitably, we all participate a local and national network of government, market economy, social system, and legal system.

Many of these issues are no longer the problem of any one nation or continent. Global warming, the pollution of our oceans, nuclear contamination, our declining natural resources, and other contemporary problems must be considered from a global perspective. Our domestic politics and economic system have now become entwined with the politics and economics of South American countries, the Soviet Union, the Middle East, and the rest of the world. We must help our students have more than a narrow historical perspective; we must now encourage a concept of global history and understanding. One way is to compare the contemporary United States to other nations. Another is to make historical comparisons between our nation and other countries.

Obviously, no course or curriculum can fully prepare adolescents for adult responsibilities, especially at a time when the world is changing so rapidly. Learning to be a responsible citizen is a challenging, lifelong task. And, as we have pointed out, knowing about our political, economic, social, and legal systems is not enough to function as responsible decision-makers. Somehow, our educational system and our curricula must do a better job of helping students think critically, resolve conflicts, cooperate, communicate, gather information, and synthesize. Without an ability to separate fact from fiction and values from facts, our future citizens cannot be expected to make rational decisions.

Recommended Curriculum Goals

A multidisciplinary civics curriculum and instructional materials could be based on eight major goals.

1. Help students develop an understanding of the structure, function, funding, and interaction of our political, legal, economic, and social systems.

2. Help students develop an understanding of the global network of relationships among our political, legal, economic, and social systems and those of other countries.

3. Provide students with knowledge, skills, and values so that they may become constructively involved in our political, legal, economic, and social systems.

4. Help students develop a commitment to the importance of individual participation in America's political, legal, economic, and social systems.

5. Help students develop a sense of personal efficacy.

6. Provide students with the opportunity to learn about their duties, rights, and responsibilities as future participants in our political, legal, economic, and social systems.

7. Help students understand how the Constitution provides the basic framework within which our political, legal, economic, and social systems function.

8. Acquaint students with the historical foundations of American democracy and help them consider the contemporary and future implications of these foundations.

Essential Content

The first curriculum goal, to help students understand our political, legal, social, and economic systems, is the most crucial. Many concepts, such as values, power, socialization, and culture, relate to more than one system. For example, we accept the values of human dignity and freedom as fundamental. We implement these values in all of our systems, as well as in our personal behaviors toward others. We can also consider other concepts, such as interdependence, from one or several different perspectives. Clearly, the concept applies to all four of the systems we want to teach.

Struggles for power take place within and between systems. Individuals and groups participating in our political system try to gain influence over others, but so do individuals and groups in the legal, economic, and social domains as well. Values and ethics? Yes, these, too, must be considered from multiple perspectives. In our economic system, the desire to make a profit reflects recognized, accepted, and positive values. Yet, when lawyers in our legal system seek to obtain a percentage of jury awards, Americans object. The concept of property also takes on different dimensions, depending on the perspective of each system. Making such comparisons can help students understand that a worthy and accepted value in one system may not be regarded in the same way in a different context. Only by teaching concepts such as these that span our legal, social, economic, and political domains, can we help students see the relative nature of our beliefs, principles, and behaviors. For a statement of political, legal, social, and economic concepts and generalizations appropriate for a civics course, see New Horizons in Civic Education (Banaszak, Hartoonian & Leming, 1992).

Values

Values are the ideals or behaviors to which the group attaches a high worth or regard. Values are the standards of choice that guide the community toward meaningful and desirable ends. As such, they are inevitably present as a part of the human experience, functioning as the criteria by which thought and action are oriented, assessed and justified. The norms and sanctions in a society are expressions of its values.

Related concepts: Ethics
Norm
Sanctions

Civic values

For a society to survive, most of its citizens must share a common set of values. An effective civics curriculum should help students understand that our values affect all of our civic decisions, just as the values of people in other cultures affect theirs. One of our educational goals should be to reinforce students' commitment to our democratic values. At the same time, students must also learn to inquire about and debate accepted democratic concepts and relate them to non-democratic ideals of other countries.

A multidisciplinary civics curriculum can show students that the meaning of a particular value can change over time and that civic values really represent goals that we all strive for, rather

than our actual deeds. Although we affirm certain values, we also make choices and behave in certain ways. These choices and behaviors may reflect our stated values and they may not. Many times, they reflect a compromise between equally strong values that come into conflict. Students need to learn how to analyze our country's professed values and compare them with our leaders' decisions and behaviors.

Real-life situations can help students see how people's values affect their civic decisions and behaviors. Communities must often choose a course of action that satisfies some community members and dissatisfies others. Environmental issues, for example, can force communities to choose either jobs and productivity or clean air and water. In our society we value both, and thus we must make compromises.

Changes in our society have also brought changes in beliefs, assumptions, and values. Here again, students need to understand how our values have evolved. For example, many of our social values come from Europe, American Indian culture, Africa, and Asia. We have synthesized both Western and non-Western beliefs and have made them uniquely American. Thus, even in the study of values, historical and global perspectives are important.

For purposes of instruction, the following values are suggested as an appropriate focus for educating our next generation of citizens:

Basic Values -- Values that guide the creation and subsequent evolution and interpretation of the Constitution.

1) **Human dignity**
   The worth and dignity of each person is of supreme value.

2) **Individual Freedom**
   Each individual can and does make personal choices that affect his/her life and society.

Social/Institutional Values -- Supporting values that are implemented through the basic systems of our society.

3) **Rule of law**
   Actions carried out with governmental power are authorized by laws promulgated through established procedures rather than being dictated by personal whim or private ambition.

4) **Consent of the governed**
   The authority of the government to govern comes from the people to whom public officials are responsibilities.

5) **Property**
   Each individual has the right to hold and be secure in owner ship of private property;

6) **Due process**
   Before being deprived of life, liberty or property, each person is entitled to guaranteed protection of rights under the law;

7) **Equality of opportunity**
   Each person has equal opportunity to fulfill his/her potential;

8) **Freedom of thought and expression**
Each person has the right to hold and express personal views in speech and behavior (freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly and petition);

9) **Pluralism**
The difference in how people choose to live their lives and their values is welcomed, respected and free from unwarranted external intrusion;

10) **Authority**
Legitimate power, recognized and sanctioned by custom, institutions, law, constitution, or morality is respected.

11) **Privacy**
The right of individuals, groups or institutions to determine, when, how and to what extent information about them is communicated to others;

12) **Justice**
Each person is entitled to fair, equal treatment under the law.

13) **Promotion of the common welfare**
Each individual has a responsibility to work to protect the political, legal, economic and social systems and freedoms enjoyed by all.

Personal Values -- Values that are implemented by individuals in their citizen role as they relate to others.

14) **Integrity**
Having soundness of moral character and acting consistently with one's values.

15) **Reasoned judgment**
Using objective, rational, and systematic reasoning processes to make logical decisions.

16) **Responsibility**
Accepting the consequences of one's choices and actions.

17) **Participation**
Actively taking part in the political, legal, economic and social systems.

18) **Patriotism**
Loving and supporting one's country through attitude and action.

19) **Tolerance**
Permitting without hindrance the expression of opinions and practices that differ from one's own.

20) **Compromise**
Being willing to settle disputes by mutual concessions.

21) **Cooperation**
Working together voluntarily for mutual benefit.

22) **Courage**
Facing difficulty and danger with firmness and without fear.

23) **Truthfulness**
Being in accord with fact or reality and free from fraud or deception.

24) **Fairness**
Treating others without dishonesty and injustice.

25) **Generosity/compassion**
Being sensitive to the welfare of others and willingness to be liberal in giving or sharing of one's resources.

Global Awareness

More than any previous generation, today's adolescents must develop a global perspective of political, social, and economic issues. Our "global village" is made up of many nations, some with our democratic values and some without. The United States is part of an increasingly integrated and well-informed global system. No country can isolate itself and assume responsibility only for what happens within its boundaries.

Improved communication and transportation now allow us to cover our planet with ease. Because of these improvements, our understanding of the world is rapidly improving. Yet other technological advances--and the sheer numbers of human beings on our planet--have created the need for difficult and farsighted political and economic decisions. What will happen when our supplies of natural oil run out? What about acid rain and its affects on American and Canadian forests? What can we do when other countries refuse to cut back on pollution and industrial wastes? Today, each country's political and economic decisions affect not only its citizens, but others as well.

We realize all too well that we are now capable of destroying all life on earth. Our methods of choice include pollutants, toxic wastes, biological and chemical weapons, and atomic bombs. We cannot go back in time and eliminate these changes in our technology. Unfortunately, our ability to destroy ourselves will remain. We must, however, attempt to ensure that future generations of American citizens have the global awareness and the problem-solving abilities they need to make reasoned, responsible decisions. Thus, one of our goals should be to increase students' understanding of our global systems and the delicate balances we must maintain if we are to survive.

Effective Instructional Strategies

Certain types of instructional strategies will help ensure the success of the civics course. The Our Democracy project recommends that, in general, teachers approach instruction in the following ways:

1. Select, organize, and present content in a way that relates to the life experiences of young adolescents.
2. Be concrete. Reduce the use of abstractions and technical vocabulary.
3. Relate local political, legal, economic, and social systems to state, national, and international systems.
4. Focus on people. Use case studies or biographies that show them actively participating in our four systems.
5. Focus on public policy issues, including those that span generations and nations.
6. Compare our systems with the systems of other nations.
7. Provide opportunities for students to discuss and think about cultural values.
8. Involve students in a variety of "hands-on" activities and investigations.
9. Use cooperative learning to reinforce content and skills.

For eighth- and ninth-grade students, materials should stress active learning. Games, simulations, cooperative learning activities and other group activities can help students learn to communicate, cooperate, negotiate, and compromise. Such skills will prove extremely valuable as they mature into adults.

The new curriculum must also find ways for students to actually participate in civic activities, including volunteer community service. Through such activities, adolescents can begin to feel that they are part of the community and that individuals can make a difference. Students need to develop the skills--and the will--to participate in their community. Voluntary service, for example, will allow students to:

1. Address a real need;
2. Bring community issues into the classroom for discussion;
3. Collaborate with adults and other adolescents;
4. Increase their self-esteem and sense of civic responsibility; and
5. See others' perspectives of community problems and events.

Perhaps most importantly, all of the materials and activities for students must be appropriate for eighth- and ninth-grade students. Civic illiteracy will not be wiped out by demanding more of our students than they are capable of giving. Teachers and curriculum developers must be sensitive in making intellectual demands of young adolescents. Students in grades eight and nine are beginning to shift from concrete to abstract thought. Yet, when they think about current events and conflicts, they still tend to focus on their own needs and the personal consequences of issues and events. Thus, the new curriculum must provide plenty of opportunities for students to personalize what they are learning. Even though adolescents begin to give up an egocentric view of the world at about this age, they typically do not place importance on community needs and public consequences until they are older.

Civics materials should provide concrete, relevant examples that help students move toward more abstract thinking. Students need to apply what they learn to familiar settings and to knowledge they already have. In this way, we can make civic instruction an active process, one that helps adolescents develop a strong commitment to our democratic values. At the same time, we will also be developing critical thinkers and problem-solvers who have a balanced perspective toward our democratic systems.

Policy Making

One technique that has the potential to integrate the four systems and to develop decision-making and critical thinking skills is the action of making policy.

The general policy making strategy suggested here explores the dynamics between the ideal and real; between social and personal principles and the "facts" of life. That is, a tension exists between what we believe and what we do. Exploring that tension provides a means for students to practice policy making.

Policy making starts when we begin to ask if the gap between ideals and practices is too wide. All of us can develop statements of principles based upon our (historical and contemporary) understandings of who we are. We can examine classic statements of our ideals. Documents such as the Declaration of Independence, the Preamble to the U.S. Constitution, Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I have a dream" speech,and so forth can help in this endeavor. We can then assess the present situation and develop public policies intended to bring our lives more in congruence

with our principles. Finally, we should evaluate the consequences of our policies and make corrections as needed.

This general pedagogical strategy is the foundation for a policy making model of instruction. It can help us focus on the future, use past experiences and wisdom, and evaluate the ethical health of the group and society.

The four systems are naturally integrated in the real world, and its policy dilemmas. The study of issues and formulation of policies provides the context for students to integrate and use the reservoirs of knowledge cited above.

SUMMARY

An interdisciplinary civics curriculum can provide an optimal civic education for young adolescents. Young adolescence is a critical transition period--one in which students begin to develop their political understanding and their capacity to think in sociocentric terms. Government, community, and society no longer exist simply to serve their personal needs. As difficult as the process may be, students begin to understand that what is best for them and their family may not always be best for the community.

Young adolescents begin to understand that issues and people are not completely right or wrong, good or bad, or any other extreme. Through their experiences and their schooling, they come to see that a democracy cannot exist without diverse opinions and the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The multidisciplinary approach recommended by the Our Democracy project can help young adolescents develop a mature understanding of their civic environment.

Students who complete such a multidisciplinary course should have achieved a substantial number of learning goals. For example, they should know the historical foundations and the structure of our political, legal, economic, and social systems; they should understand our basic societal goals and values; and they should have improved attitudes toward our democracy and their future roles as citizens.

In addition, students should have developed competencies and skills that will benefit them as they mature. For example, they should have had practice in communicating ideas to others, cooperating with others in groups, compromising, analyzing data, and making thoughtful decisions and judgments about people, institutions, and our political, legal, economic, and social systems.

Exemplary Lessons

The following lessons show how the principles contained in this paper can be implemented in the classroom. Each lesson is complete with all necessary directions and student materials. These lessons can supplement any civics textbook. More importantly, teachers are encouraged to use these lessons as models and to create their own civics lessons that show the interdisciplinary nature of civics content and combine instruction about our political, legal, economic and social systems.

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Exemplary Lessons

LESSON PLAN 1

"MORE THAN JUST A SET OF WHEELS": GEARING UP FOR CAR OWNERSHIP

Overview

As student focus on the decisions to be made, the steps to be taken and the impact and implications of buying and owning an automobile, they will learn that both these actions entail a complex involvement in society. They will discover that beyond simply the selection and the subsequent ownership of a "set of wheels" people are impacting and being impacted by what could be called other wheels (or systems) within the society. An activity, for example, such as car ownership, is impacted by the political, legal, economic and social systems in the society.

Part One of this lesson focuses on Maria, a sixteen-year-old high school student, who wants to buy her first car. She soon learns that beyond just considering a "set of wheels," she must consider other wheels (or systems) within the society. For example, Maria must think about the laws that impact car ownership and driving itself (legal system), the personal cost of car ownership (economic system), the cost to society of this ownership) social/economic systems), and learn which governmental agencies handle registration and driver's licenses (political system). Maria must also confront family rules (social system) on such issues as the driving of friends to parties or the hours of use on school nights.

This opening lesson through various activities will introduce students to the concept that they too, as members of society, are also participants in the four systems--political, legal, economic and social.

In Part Two of this lesson, students will have an opportunity to apply their knowledge about the four systems to a case study about rules and regulations at a middle school. They7 will discover through discussions and written activities that school rules not only involve the students, but also raise issues beyond the school that impact on the political, legal, economic and social systems of the larger society.

Instructional Objectives

Student will:

* Define political, legal, economic and social systems.

* List examples that demonstrate how the purchase and ownership of an automobile impacts political, legal, social and economic systems.

* Identify and generalize about the possible consequences of a set of school rules and regulations.

* Analyze from a case study how school rules also involve the legal, political, social and economic systems.

SUGGESTED USE: Introductory unit in a civics course (use as an introductory lesson to the four systems and to demonstrate how all individuals in the society take part in these systems.)

TIME REQUIRED: two to three class periods

Major Concepts

Civic participation Involvement in the society; individuals in their role as citizen actively taking part in the political, legal, economic and social systems.

Political system The political system involves policies and procedures connected with the government. It deals with questions such as: Who rules? Why? Who gets what resources? And what social values will be implemented? A major component of this system is the authority of government to act and the power to enforce its laws. In a democracy this power and authority comes from the people, and is usually established by a written constitution.

Legal system For purposes of background for this lesson, a discussion of the legal system could include an understanding of what is a law. (A law can be thought of as any written rule prescribed by the authority of the government.) However, "common law" in the United States is "unwritten law" developed over the years through custom and tradition. Most important, common law changes over time to suit the changing attitudes and needs of the community. In the springville Middle School case study (Part II of the lesson), for example, students are asked to examine laws/rules that reflect the school community's attitudes and needs. The Code of

Conduct and Dress Code for Students in the case study can also be seen as a student Bill of Rights. This is not only because it describes specific student rights, but also because it involves such actual Bill of Rights issues such as freedom of speech and the right to privacy.

Economic system Economics is traditionally thought of as the study of the production, distribution and the use of income for the consumption of goods or services, or material public welfare. The first part of the lesson focuses on the possible use of income to purchase an automobile. Thus, this aspect of the consumption of goods could be stressed. Students could be asked to discuss the various choices people have for spending their money, and the rade-offs each person must make when there is a limited amount of money to spend.

Social system The social system relates to the life, welfare and relations of individuals in their community and in society in general. The case study of Springville Middle School in the second part of the lesson, for example, describes a variety of social systems: the clubs, the school administration, the school board and student body. Each of these groups has its own interests and priorities. However, each of these systems must operate in harmony for the school to function and learning to occur.

Materials

A copy of the following for each student:

- Student Handout 1-A (*Dear Dad, I'm Ready To Buy a Set of Wheels*).
- Student Handout 1-B (*Another Set of Wheels--chart on the Four Systems.*)
- Student Handout 1-C (*A Case Study: Things Have Gone Too Far at Springville Middle School.*This handout includes the *Code of Conduct and Dress Code for Students at Springville Middle School.*)
- Student Handout 1-D (*What are the Consequences? What are the Issues?*)
- Other Materials
  Sample classified advertisements for automobiles from daily newspaper

Part I

1) Begin the lesson by distribution or showing the classified sections of newspapers that list automobiles for sale. Ask students who might be interested in looking at this section of the newspaper? Responses will include "me", a car buyer, or someone wanting to know how much their car might be worth, etc.

2) Tell students that in today's lesson they will learn about Maria, a sixteen-year old high school student who wants to buy a car. Maria learns that besides just looking through newspaper advertisements and visiting used car lots in order to find a car, she has to consider many other things.

3) Ask students to jot down some of their own ideas bout what things they might consider if they were to but a car. Students should save their lists to use when they complete Student Handout I-B, *Another Set of Wheels--Chart on the Four Systems*.

4) Distribute Student Handout-A, *Dear Dad, I'm Ready to Buy a Set of Wheels*. Ask students to read this handout and be prepared to discuss its contents. The handout begins with a letter from Maria to her father asking his permission to purchase an automobile. His response includes a request that, before he gives an answer, that she consider what is actually involved in car ownership.

5) Review the components of Student Handout I-A by beginning with the contents of the two letters (Maria to her father and his response to her). Sample questions that can be asked about Maria's letter to her father.

- Why does Maria think her father should be proud of her? (Saving her earnings)
- What does Maria mean when she writes, I'm almost ready to buy a "set of wheels--not two but four?" (She is ready to buy a car and not something with two wheels like a bicycle.)
- What does she want from her father? (His permission to buy a car.)

- What else does she discuss in her letter (Model and color car she would like, the classified ads, etc.)

Sample questions that can be asked about the father's letter to Maria:

- Does her father give Maria permission to buy a car? (No, but it wasn't a clear, definite rejection of her request. He asks her to consider some other things.)
- What does he want Maria to consider? (The other wheels or systems in the society that impact on her buying and owning a car.)
- How does he suggest she do this? (To recall what she learned in her Springville Middle School civics class about the four systems.)
- Why do you think Maria will or will not get permission to buy a car? (Answers will vary.)

6. Review with students Maria's Next Steps (item 3 on Student Handout 1-A). As part of this review, assist student to define the four systems in their own words and to give examples. As students complete the work required on the chart on Student Handout 1-B, the concepts about these systems will become clearer to them.

7. Distribute Student Handout 1-B, *Another Set of Wheels--Chart on the Four* Systems. Tell students that they can "help Maria" by completing this chart. They will also be helping themselves, when and if they ever consider car ownership, by knowing what is involved. Ask students to think about all the ways that car ownership involves the four systems. Students can refer back to some of the ideas they jotted down at the beginning of the lesson. (See item 3 of this procedure section.)

8. After students complete the class or individual charts, review their responses and the placement of various ideas under the four systems. Students should be told that some responses can be listed in several categories. (For example, insurance might relate to the political, legal, economic or social systems. The chart, when completed by the students, might include some of the following:

Another Set of Wheels
A Sample Chart

Political	Legal	Economic	Social
* Must be involved with the state government office that registers cars.	* Must know laws related to driving (such as speed limits)	* Need to work part time in order to buy gas and oil.	* Need to follow school rules about where to park.
	* Must be familiar with laws regarding car registration.	* Owning a car might mean giving up other purchases (clothes, gifts, etc).	* Must follow family rules regarding use of car.

9. Summarize the responses and suggest to students that all of their actions impact to a greater or lesser degree all the systems. Tell students that what occurs at schools also relates to these systems. Inform students that the next part of the lesson will look at a middle school, its rules and regulations for conduct and dress and how the four systems are impacted.

Part II

10) Begin the lesson by telling the class they will be studying a situation involving a new dress code and codes of conduct for Springville Middle School students. Explain to students that although Springville is fictional, controversies around dress codes and school rules are very real and have occurred in many cities in this country. Distribute Student Handout 1-C, *A Case Study: Things Have Gone too Far at Springville Middle School*. This handout also includes ten rules for conduct and dress. Ask students to read this case study. (If more appropriate, the teacher can read the case study to the students.)

11) Review with students the situation at Springville Middle School by asking them to recall several things they remember about the case study. In abbreviated form, write their responses on the board. Ask students, what was Ms. Snowden's solution to problems at the middle school? (She was going to institute a new dress code and code of conduct for all Springville students.) Ask students to review the ten rules on the handout. Encourage students to jot down their feelings about these rules.

12) Conduct a discussion after students have read the case study and reviewed the set of rules on Student Handout 1-C. The discussion can be based on some of the following questions:

* How would you feel if this happened at your school?
* How would you respond?
* Which rules are the worst?
* Which rules seem reasonable? Why?
* Can the principal really do this?
* Instead of these rules, what could Ms. Snowden have done? How?
* If these rules are enforced, what are the consequences?
* Would your parents like this set of rules?

13) Discuss with students that this situation at Springville Middle School can also be viewed as one where the rules and regulations also brought up political, legal, economic and social issues. They should begin to think how and give some examples.

14) Distribute Student Handout 1-D, *What are the Consequences? What are the Issues?* to each student. Ask them first to write down what might be the consequences of these new rules at Springville (e.g., the consequences of banning social clubs). Help students to realize that some of these rules will affect more than just the students (e.g., parents will have to buy new school clothes to replace the jeans, etc.). On this handout students are also asked to determine if the rules involve either a political, economic, social or legal issue, or some combination of these issues. If necessary, the teacher should review with students some of the background information listed below on the four systems.

* **POLITICAL SYSTEM**. The political system involves policies and procedures connected with the government. It deals with questions of "Who rules?" "Why?" "Who gets what resources" and "What social values will get implemented?" A major component of this system is the authority of government to act and the power to enforce its laws. In a democracy this power and authority comes from the people, and is usually established by a written constitution.

* **LEGAL SYSTEM**. For purposes of background for this lessons, the discussion should include an understanding of what is a law. (A law can be thought of as any written rule prescribed by authority of the government.) However, "common law" in the United States is "unwritten law" developed over the years through custom and tradition. Most important, common law changes over time to suit the changing attitudes and needs of the community. In the Springville Middle School case study, students are asked to examine laws/rules that reflect the school community's attitudes and needs. The Codes of Conduct and Dress Code for Students in the case study can also be seen as a student Bill of Rights. This is not only because it describes specific student rights, but also because it involves such actual Bill of Rights issues such as freedom of speech and the right to privacy.

* **ECONOMIC SYSTEM**. Economics is the study of the production, distribution and the use of income for the consumption of goods or services, or material public welfare. Students could be asked to discuss the various choices people have for spending their money, and the trade-offs they must make when there is a limited amount of money to spend. What, for example, is a possible trade-off a student will make by paying or not paying dues to have a club membership? (e.g., gave up club membership for C.D. player)

* **SOCIAL SYSTEM**. The social system relates to the life, welfare and relations of individuals in their community and in society in general. The case study of Springville Middle School has described a variety of social systems: the club, the school administration and the student body. Each of these groups has its own interests and priorities. However, each of these systems must operate in harmony for the school to function and learning to occur.

15) Discuss students' responses to the assignment, Student Handout 1-D, *What are the Consequences? What are the Issues?* Ask students to consider for each rule:

* What might be the political consequences of this rule?
* What might be the legal consequences of this rule?
* What might be the economic consequences of this rule?
* What might be the social consequences of this rule?

Assist students to understand how in a democratic society, the four systems interconnect. Students should be made aware that an action within one system will have a ripple effect on the others. Ask students to think of an action within one system in the Springville case study that could possibly influence another system. For example, a parent of one of the students could find the principal's school rules (social system) impacting the student's right of freedom of speech (legal system). When students have completed the handout, they will have discovered that the ten items in the Code of Conduct and Dress Code each contain issues related to all four systems. They might also discover that trying to achieve a goal within one system can have an adverse or positive impact on the goals of the other systems.

Evaluation

1) Assess how well students participated in class discussions and the brainstorm activity.

2) Evaluate students' responses to Student Handout 1-B (*Another Set of Wheels--Chart on the Four Systems*).

3) Evaluate students' responses to Student Handout 1-D (*What are the Consequences? What are the Issues?*)

3) Evaluate students' ability to apply the four systems to an event or action in their own or in their family's life.

Extended Activities

1) Have students make a chart listing both the costs and benefits of car ownership. Assist students to understand what is given up for car ownership. (The opportunity cost.)

2) Ask each student to bring to class one article that discusses an issue that is a concern to them (e.g., minimum wage, a vote on a proposed new sports stadium, local ban on dirt bikes in county parks, proposed warning labels on record/CD covers). You may want to give the students several days to find articles students bring to class. Assist the students to discover the political, legal, economic and social implications of the issues raised in each article.

STUDENT HANDOUTS

for

LESSON ONE

"MORE THAN JUST A SET OF WHEELS":

GEARING UP FOR CAR OWNERSHIP

Student Handout 1-A

Dear Dad, I'm Ready to Buy a Set of Wheels

DIRECTIONS TO STUDENTS:

Read the two letters and the information on Maria's Next Steps following the letters. Be prepared to discuss the letters and the steps Maria takes to respond to her father.

1) Letter from Maria to her Father

Dear Dad,

You would be very proud of me, as I have been saving all of my summer paychecks. This money plus what I've saved the last two years means I'm almost ready to buy "a set of wheels" -- not two but four. I hope you'll give me permission to buy a car in three months when I turn sixteen. Each day I look the newspaper at the classified ads to see what I might be able to buy. I think a convertible would be great. Either red or black would be awesome, but a white one would also be fine.

I hope you are well. Please write soon and please say "yes" about the car. I miss you.

Love, your daughter,
Maria

2) Letter from Dad to Maria

Dearest Maria,

Your letter came two days ago and I was very happy to hear from you. I was also pleased to learn that you have been saving all of the money you've made this summer. I know how excited you must be about the possibility of getting your first car. Before buying a "set of wheels," as you say, there are numerous things that you need to consider. You need to think about some of the "other wheels" that make the society go around.

Remember when you were a student at Springville Middle School, you studied about these "other wheels." The civics teacher called these wheels systems (the political, legal, economic and social systems). Before I can consider giving my permission for you to buy a car, I want you to realize what is involved. Take a look at the four systems (the other four wheels). Think about how these four systems impact on your buying and owning a car.

In your next letter tell me what you've discovered about these systems (the other wheels). Also, let me know how much you've saved so far. I miss you very much and I'm planning to be back in town before your birthday.

Love
Dad

3) Maria's Next Steps

After Maria read her father's letter, she thought to herself, "Well, he didn't say no and he didn't say yes, and so there's hope for getting his permission to buy a car." Maria started thinking about the systems and wondering why her Dad always had to make things complicated.

Next, Maria looked through the textbook from her civics class at Springville Middle School and found the "four wheels" or systems her Dad mentioned in his letter. the four systems were listed: political, legal, economic and social. They were all defined too. Now all Maria had to do was "gear up" and make the connections between the four systems and the buying and owning of a car. Can you help Maria make these links? Can you help her write a letter to her father explaining the connections between the four systems and the buying and owning of an automobile?

A page from Maria's Civics textbook.

Civics Chapter One
An Introduction

OUR COMPLEX LIVES

Did you ever stop to think about all the roles you play each day? Young people like you play active roles in society. They have roles in society as part of a family, as students, as friends, as members of a club or team, as consumers, as citizens and sometimes as workers.

There are connections or links between the roles all people play and the four systems listed below.
throughout this textbook you will learn how each person is connected with these wheels or systems.

Political: The political system involves policies and procedures connected with the government. A major part of the political system is the authority of the government to take actions and enforce its laws. Can you think of several ways that you have been involved with the government?

Legal: The legal system deals with questions of justice. This system provides ways to settle disputes between individuals and also between individuals and the government. The legal system protects the basic civic rights of all citizens. this system also includes the courts and legal procedures. Can you think of several laws that affect your school?

Economic: If you stop at a store after school to get a soda and an apple, you are buying goods. All physical products like apples and sodas, and even televisions, are called goods. If you go to a bicycle shop to have your tire repaired, you are buying a service. Both goods and services satisfy your wants. Every society has a system for providing goods and services to satisfy people's wants. This system is called an economic system. In this chapter, you will learn more about the role you play each day in the economy.

Social: Can you list four or more groups of people you had contact within the last five days? You might list your family, club or church members, or students and teachers at your school. the social system includes all of these groups. This system provides a way for you to interact in harmony with others in the society. In this chapter, you will discover the numerous ways that people are linked together in this social system. As you study in this civics class, you will learn more about all four systems. You will also discover how all systems are related to each other.

Student Handout 1-B
Another Set of Wheels:
Chart on the Four Systems

Name_____

Class_____

DIRECTIONS:

In the spaces below, please list the ways that buying and owning a car relates to the four systems. One example has already been listed under each system.

Political	Legal	Economic	Social
* Must be involved with the state government office that registers cars	* Must know laws related to driving (such as speed limits)	* Need to work part time in order to buy gas and oil.	* Need to follow school rules about where to park.

Student Handout 1-C
A Case Study: Things Have Gone too Far
at Springville Middle School

"Things have finally gone too far," exclaimed Ms. Tina Snowden, Principal of Springville Middle School. "Something has got to be done, and done right now!" That morning three students were sent to her office for listening to music on their Walkmans during class. Two of the student came from Mr. Martin's health class, where he was showing a lengthy film on good posture. The other student was listening to cassettes during Ms. Bass's swimming class.

During the first few years Ms. Snowden was Principal of Springville Middle School, she saw very few disciplinary problems. Then the clubs began. The first club to be formed was the "Iron Dudes." The Iron Dudes was composed mostly of students from the various sports teams, like football and soccer. They held meeting on Saturday afternoons and often went together to the Springville Mall once club business was completed.

The Clubs

Soon many other clubs sprung up; the "Super Sisters," Fashing Plates," Dirt Bikers" and "Out Casts," to name just a few. Before long, members of each club were wearing club jackets to school and putting their club colors and logos onto their tee shirts and sweatshirts. After a while, anyone could tell, even from a distance, who belonged to what club and who belonged to no club at all.

Many of the teachers objected to the way some of the students dressed for class. In addition to club jackets and shirts, other students wore tee shirts with images from their favorite rock and roll or heavy metal band printed on the front. These tee shirts, along with torn blue jeans and unlaced tennis shoes, soon became a very popular style of dress at Springville Middle School. "I won't tolerate it," howled Mr. Reyes, "not in my class! Students who dress smart think smart. That's my motto." Other teachers had the same attitude as Mr. Reyes.

Thrashers and Ten Speeders

One day about six months ago, Ms. Snowden was called to the cafeteria to break up a scuffle between members of the "Thrashers," a club for skateboarders, and the "Ten Speeders," students who rode their bikes to school. A Thrasher and a Ten Speeder had collided in the school year. Each had accused the other of doing it on purpose. The fight in the cafeteria was the result of many months of tension between the two clubs.

Before long, various clubs staked out certain parts of the cafeteria and the schoolyard as their own. Students who did not belong to a club often found that where they could sit or socialize at school was limited by one club gathering or another. Some of the students who did not belong to clubs even complained to Ms. Snowden. Some students told her about getting teased and bullied because they did not belong to a club, or because they could not afford to pay the weekly dues which some of the clubs required for membership. "No pay, no play," was a common rule for club membership. The dues collected went for parties and to buy more club shirts and jackets.

"Enough is enough," thought Ms. Snowden one day on her way home. "I'm going to change this unhappy situation at Springville Middle School once and for all. I'm going to institute a new dress code and code of conduct for all Springville Students."

Student Handout 1-C,
Code of Conduct and Dress Code for Students
at Springville Middle School

1) No social clubs allowed. Students may only be members of clubs approved by the principal and supervised by a teacher, such as the Math Club or the Chess Club.

2) No writing or pictures permitted on any tee shirts or sweatshirts. This includes names of clubs, rock and roll bands, sports teams, logos, or written messages of any kind. However, shirts with the school name and logo may be worn.

3) No blue jeans.

4) No torn clothing (even if bought in that condition).

5) No athletic shoes except during physical education class. Laces must be tied when street shoes are worn.

6) No skateboards on school grounds.

7) No walkman radios or cassettes. This includes in class, in the halls, or anywhere on school grounds. This rule is intended for safety as well as for discipline.

8) No bicycles allowed unless students live at least one and one-half miles from the school. Spaces for bicycles will be limited to those students who get advance approval from the principal.

9) No saving seats in the cafeteria or at sporting events for more than one other person.

10) No fighting. Violation of this rule will result in immediate suspension for five days.

Ms. Tina Snowden
Principal
Springville Middle School

Student Handout 1-D
What are the Consequences? What are the Issues?

Name _____

Class_____

DIRECTIONS:

(1) Read each of the rules on the Student Handout 1-C, Code of Conduct and Dress Code for Students at the Springville Middle School. (2) Write down in the space provided, what might be the consequence of each new rule. Keep in mind how each rule could affect students, their parents, the teachers and others in the city of Springville. (3) Write why you think each rule involves one of the following issues or a combination of these issues:

The Issues

a political issues	an economic issue
a legal issue	a social issue

1) NO SOCIAL CLUBS. The Consequences.

2) NO SHIRTS WITH WRITING. The Consequences.

3) NO BLUE JEANS. The Consequences.

4) NO TORN CLOTHING. The Consequences.

5) NO ATHLETIC SHOES. The Consequences.

6) NO SKATEBOARDS. The Consequences.

7) NO WALKMAN RADIOS. The Consequences.

8) NO BICYCLES. The Consequences.

9) NO SAVING SEATS. The Consequences.

10) NO FIGHTING. The Consequences.

Lesson Plan 2

Jets over the School Yard:

A Dilemma for Students in

Megalopolis

Overview

Democracy can not last long when its people are not involved and participating. By staying informed, voting, and influencing policy, citizens help shape the rules that control their lives. This lesson explains the need for participation, explains the functions of interest groups and involves students in a simulated public hearing.

A number of U.S. cities and towns outside of large metropolitan areas are reviving airports once abandoned as too small. This lesson presents a scenario where such an event has occurred with the reopening of the Megalopolis Regional Airport. This airport is located a mile from the city's only middle school Each day, students at Megalopolis & Middle School are confronted by the ongoing noise of as they take off and land. In this lesson students will discover how Megalopolis middle School and others in the community, ugh the public hearing process, confront the range of issues that surround the growing Megalopolis Regional Airport.

Instructional Objectives

Students will:

Understand the importance of citizen participation in a democracy.

Provide written evidence supporting the position they favor on the airport dilemma.

Brainstorm examples of different types of *public hearings* (e.g., environmental, education, health and welfare, utilities rate setting, defense, family, and transportation issues).

Participate in a Megalopolis City Council hearing process.

Major Concepts:

Citizen participation	individuals in their role as citizens actively g part in the political, legal, economic and social systems
Democracy	government by the people; a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and ex by them directly or indirectly through a system of freely elected representatives
Interest group	a group of individuals who share a similar interest and opinion on an issue and attempt to influence public policy.
Public hearing	a special meeting held to receive sworn testimony on a case

Tolerance	permitting without hindrance the expression of opinions that differ from one's own or one's group

Related Concepts:

Noise pollution	loud, unpleasant sounds that detract from productive human activity
Air pollution	discharging of waste materials into the air

SUGGESTED USE: This could be used in a civics/government unit dealing with local government or citizen action, and whenever the topics of interest groups or public hearings are taught.

TIME REQUIRED: Three class periods.

Materials

A copy of Student Handouts 2-A *(Participating in Public Hearings)*, 2-B *(Summary of Positions.- jets over the School Yard)*, 2-5, Part 2 *(What Do You Think?)* and 2-C *(The Public Hearing)* for each person in the class. Student Handout 2-D *(Role of City Council President)* is limited to students participating in actual hearing. *Optional material:* audiotape of airport sounds (planes going off and landing), used to dramatize the noise situation at Megalopolis Middle School.

Procedure

DAY ONE

1) Give students Handout 2-A *(Participating in Public Hearings)*. Ask them to read it and answer the first four questions. Students may answer the questions individually or in small cooperative groups. After they have written their answers, discuss the reading and their answers stressing participation, public hearing and interest group.

2) Tell students that there are a wide range of public hearings, thus allowing citizens to participate in decision making on many of society's issues. Have students brainstorm and fill in examples on this handout of different types *of public hearings.* TI-ds activity may be done cooperatively or as a whole. Give students the opportunity to share the examples they have brainstormed. Potential student answers include:

Environmental	airport noise, trash burners, waste disposal, water and air quality
utility	rate increase telephone, gas and electric
Education	sex education, textbook adoption, boundary changes, book banning and introduction of new curriculum
Health & Welfare	AIDS, abortion, homelessness, hunger and drugs.
Defense	SDI, new programs, such as the Stealtli Bomber, and increase or decrease in military spending
Family	home schooling & TV violence and child care

Transportation air safety, freeways, rapid transit and terrorism

3) Discuss with students that they will have an opportunity during the next class session to take part in a public hearing on the Megalopolis Middle School dilemma.

4) Ask for volunteers and/or select 12 students to give testimony at the hearing (3 students for each of the 4 positions). Also, choose the City Council president who will preside over the meeting. The teacher should also select 2-3 City Council members who will sit with the president, take notes and be prepared to ask questions of the various speakers after aU testimony is given. (NOTE: Before the actual hearing, the teacher should meet with all participants to review their testimony and/or their role in the hearings.) Student Handout 2-C *(Role of City Council President)* should be give to the selected students prior to the public hearing. Their responsibilities are outlined on this handout. The City Council president should also receive a copy of the *Oath Stiztmmt* (Student Handout 2-D). This will be signed by all speakers during the public hearing.

DAY TWO:

1) Ask students if they have ever been to an airport, or if more appropriate, when was the last time they were at an airport? What do they recall about their experience at the airport? (e.g., busy, crowded, noise of people, confusion, noise of jet engines) If available, play a short segment of tape of jets taking off and landing.

2) Ask students to describe the noise of planes during take off. Next ask why do people working on runways and in the hangars wear earplugs? (Noise is harmful, noise pollution, safety, dangerous to ears, required.) How far does the noise of jets carry? (Answers will vary.) What would it be like to live dose to an airport? (noisy, dangerous, convenient)

3) Tell students that they are going to learn about some students in Megalopolis who attend a middle school that is located just a mile from the town's regional airport. These students have a big dilemma. They attend the only middle school in the town, but because of the schools pretty to the airport, they hear almost constant noise from the planes. Often as many as three hours of the school day are disrupted by the noise pollution caused by the jets.

4) Organize the students into small groups and ask them to imagine the situation at Megalopolis Middle School. In their groups students should brainstorm and t how they think the students would be affected by constant noise. After they have made their lists, have one student from each group report. Record their responses on the board and discuss them. Their lists, for example, might include:

Possible Effects of the Noise from the Airport on Megalopolis Middle School

hard to hear teachers' instruction
not safe
too noisy in school yard
building vibrates
irritable teachers
no school spirit
no performances or assemblies

windows rattle
can't concentrate
poor test scores
afraid of accidents
worried parents
poor attendance at sport events

5) Point out to students that there are others in the city of Megalopolis who are also involved in the controversies surrounding the regional airport. In fact, numerous citizens have requested a public hearing be called by the Megalopolis City Council

6) Distribute Students Handout 2-B (*Summary of Positions*.) Tell students that this handout clarify for them the situation at Megalopolis Middle School. Reinforce that there are other groups in the city involved in the airport controversy. All of these groups will have an opportunity to testify at the hearing.

On Handout 2-B a brief summary is presented of the various positions of three groups: a) the Citizens for a Clean Environment, b) the Megalopolis Airport Authority and c) the Megalopolis Economic Development Association. Direct students to develop their own position for the megalopolis Middle School Association (a group of parents, teachers and students). Ask a number of students to sun-summarize the position they developed for the Megalopolis Middle School Association. This discussion will assist the teacher to select students to speak to that position at the hearing.)

7) Ask students to complete Part 2 of Handout 2-B *(What Do You* think?) On this handout, students will select one of the four positions to evaluate. They will also state their case for the position they selected (e.g., the Megalopolis City Council, etc.). Some of the students will have an opportunity to present their cases at the hearing.

8) Allow students the opportunity to develop written arguments supporting the position they favor. This can be completed either individually, in pairs, or in cooperative groups. Ss that there is no right answer. Students are to select the position they favor the most Students should also prepare to share their positions at the public hearing.

Possible Student Responses

THE POSITION OF THE MEGALOPOLIS CITIZENS FOR A CLEAN ENVIRONMENT

a) Why did you choose this position?

- I like the idea of suing the local airport authority.
- A clean environment must be a priority issue.
- It sounds the best. It makes

b) What are two strengths of the position you have chosen?

- A plan has been presented that deals with environmental issues (e.g., pollution).
- A definite action has been threatened by this group.

c) What are two weaknesses of the position you have taken?

- Is it really possible for the airport to function without polluting?
- The proposed lawsuit could be just an idle threat.

d) What might you say that would convince the City Council your position is the right one?

- The environmental needs in this community should take priority over everything else. Action needs to be taken that will be quick and permanent. The quality of our community depends on a life without pollution.

THE POSITION OF THE MEGALOPOLIS AIRPORT AUTHORITY

a) Why did you choose this position?

- I like the idea that the Megalopolis Regional Airport Authority is doing everything it can to solve this problem.
- The needs of the airport are equally important to the needs of kids.
- It sounds the best. It makes sense.

b) What are two strengths of the position you have chosen?

- This position allows flexibility. Airport sound is being monitored, flight scheduling is being revised and the airlines are being asked to use quieter jets. There is always room for improvement.

- The Megalopolis Regional Airport Authority is willing to work with the school to improve this problem.

c) What are two weaknesses of the position you have taken?

- This is not a permanent solution. It buys time and flexibility but does not solve the problem.

- Time and community pressure are against you. What if the Megalopolis Citizens for a Clean Environment files suit?

d) What might you say that would convince the City Council your position is the right one?

- We are doing everything in our power to alleviate this problem. We realize that children are involved. We understand the concern of parents and school officials. We believe the solution to this problem is found in all groups working together. AU parties in disagreement must give a little. Threatening litigation only compounds the problem. Let the Megalopolis Regional Airport Authority continue the policies we have initiated to solve this problem and through time improve the learning conditions of Megalopolis Middle School students. Money is not the solution.

THE POSITION OF THE MEGALOPOLIS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION

a) Why did you choose position?

- This proposal looks to the needs and future of the community.

- 1 like the idea that the school would be moved.

- It sounds the best. It makes sense.

b) What are two strengths of the position you have chosen?

- Moving Megalopolis Middle School offers a definite solution to the problem of airport noise pollution.

- The benefits of moving Megalopolis Middle School would offer positive economic-dc incentives to the community for years to come.

c) What are two weaknesses of the position you have taken?

- Moving the middle school is a drastic solution. It involves many details that will take time and study to make it work successfully.
- This solution looks like a developer's idea to exploit the economic potential of land close to the airport. Also, who will pay for moving the school?

d) What might you say that would convince the City Council your position is the right one?

- This problem is in need of a clear solution that will resolve all issues raised by the Megalopolis Middle School Association and the Megalopolis Citizens for a Clean Environment. Our solution does just that. Finding available land for moving the school would not be a problem. Drawing up plans for a new school facility would take time but the positive impact of the move would be lasting. The land the school is constructed on could be sold to help defray the cost of a new school facility. This is a win-win solution All parties will benefit from our solution with no need for a lawsuit and litigation that could cost the community millions of dollars.

9) Select four or five students who chose the position of the Megalopolis Middle School Association to work together and reach a consensus on their viewpoint. They should report to the whole class on their work (Day One or Day Two of the lesson). Students should refer back to the Megalopolis Middle School Association position they wrote on Student Handout 2-B and to their responses to the Position Evaluation Questions (Student Handout 2-B, Part 2, What *Do You Th*ink?)

DAY THREE.

1) Before class, set up the room with a front table where the City Council president and the two City Council commissioners can sit. Another desk or lectern should be set up where students will stand to give their testimony.

2) Begin the public hearing on the Megalopolis Regional Airport using the procedures outlined in Student Handout 2-C, The Public Hearing. As students are called forward by the president to speak, they should begin by identifying themselves. Next, right at the beginning of their four-minute presentation, students should clearly state their position.

3) At the conclusion of all testimony the City Council members and/or president can ask questions to clarify the various testimonies that were given. Remind students that at the hearing, input is given and a decision will be made at another time.

4) At the conclusion of the public hearing, students should debrief the activity through a large group discussion. Use the following questions to guide the discussion:

a) What is the purpose of a *public hearing?*

- The purpose of a public hearing is to give citizens the opportunity to give sworn testimony at a special meeting on an issue facing their local

community. This special meeting provides input on the issue being studied and allows interested advocates the chance to publicly express their feelings.

b) What is an interest group? How did you behave like an interest group?

A group of individuals who share a similar interest and opinion on an issue and attempt to influence public policy. Similarities include forming a group with a shared opinion on public policy, preparing a position statement and testifying at a public hearing.

c) Which group's position did you favor after the public hearing? Why?

Answers will vary widely in response to question. The teacher should accept any student answer that is clearly stated with cogent reasons why they support the position.

d) Review with students the four systems-political, legal, economic and social. Ask students to think about lets over the School yard: A Dilemma for Students in Megalopolis" and the testimonies of various groups (e.g., the city council, economic development group). Ask students to determine how the four systems (legal, political, economic and social) were impacted by this situation in Megalopolis.

Their responses could include:

Political. Complaints about airport noise were made by the school district to the city council, airport authority, county, state and national representatives. A public hearing was scheduled in response.

Legal. The school district and a citizens" group threatened legal action if something was not done about the airport noise.

Economic. The economic potential of land immediately surrounding the airport was realized by developers. They wanted the school moved so that they could capitalize on light industry and airport related services. The airport brought jobs to the community.

Social. The schools cannot function effectively. An average of 175 minutes a day of instructional time is disrupted by airport noise, not including the air and chemical pollution caused by jets. The noise has impacted the education of the town's youth. residents living within blocks of the school concur that the noise factor is disruptive to their daily lives.

Extended Activities

1) What are some issues facing your school and/or local community and the problems they currently face? Are there any public hearings likely to be held about these issues?

Answers will vary depending upon your local school and community and the problems they currently face.

2) Use the public hearing pure outlined in this lesson to study other community problems identified by your students, i.e., political, legal, economic, and social.

3) Have students do in-depth research projects on water, air, noise, or solid waste disposal pollution.

Review with students the meaning of the concept *pollution* and discuss the different types of pollution, including *water, air, noise and solid waste disposal.* Assist students to organize their research projects to also discuss the political, legal, economic and social issues that are involved.

Evaluation

1) Assess the quality of student participation in class discussions.

2) Evaluate answers on Student Handouts 2-A, 2-B and 2-B, Part 2.

3) Assess the quality of student participation in the public hearing process.

4) Evaluate answers on debriefing session at conclusion of public hearing.

Student Handouts

for

Lesson Two

Jets over the School Yard: A Dilemma for Students in Megalopolis

Student Handout 2-A

Participating in Public Hearings

Democracy: *government by the people; a government in which the supreme power is vested in the people and exercised by them directly or indirectly through a system of freely elected representatives*

THE NEED FOR PARTICIPATION

Monica was pleased. She had t convinced her parents to increase her allowance. It was only two weeks ago that she asked them for an increase. Her parents did not say no immediately, but wanted to "think it over." Several days later they told her she could have the increase only if she could convince them that it was needed.

Monica went to work. She talked to her friends and found that most of them had larger allowances than her. She wrote a letter to her parents explaining that and stating she had not had an increase in over four years. She explained how she would use her increased allowance. She even argued that a larger allowance would teach her to be responsible with her money and allow her to add to her savings. Her parents were impressed with her reasoning. They agreed with her and raise her allowance.

Monica had influenced her parents and her life. You've probably participated in making a decision that affects your life. Perhaps you helped set, with your parents, the time you must be home at night, what movies you can see, or, like Monica, how much allowance you receive. Maybe you've helped set some of the rules for your classroom or school. When you did these or are things, you were helping to set rules that affect your life. Citizens in a democracy do so also.

People in a democracy have a unique advantage, the power to participate in making the governmental decisions that affect their lives. Government touches almost every aspect of our lives, from the official time on our clocks to the sales and income taxes we pay, from the location of a public park to the quality of water we drink. Democracy is based on the wisdom and participation of its citizens and expects that they are the best judges of their own interests.

Being involved in public life is voluntary, but it's a responsibility that citizens must accept. Without participation other rights and freedoms provided by democratic government are in danger of being eliminated for leaders will the power from the people. Rights must be used or they will be lost. Democracy can not last long when its people are not involved and participating. Government by the people will fail when the people are not involved.

WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

There are many ways to participate. Some serve in government, actually becoming public officials either through election or appointment. But only a small number can hold office. Just staying informed about issues and events and discussing them with others is another form of participation that everyone can use. Reading newspapers, books, and magazines and watching television news provides the knowledge citizens need to evaluate suggested proposals. Discussing issues with family and friends provides a forum for citizens to inform each other and influence the ideas and actions of others.

Being informed also prepares citizens to participate more actively. Voting intelligently requires information. Voting is a way for citizens to voice their opinion and support individuals with whom they agree. Often citizens are able to vote on specific issues such as a tax increase, bond issue or express their opinions on an issue. Only citizens who have registered to vote may do so.

INTEREST GROUPS

Between elections individuals participate by voicing their opinions. On the local level they can easily meet with members of the city council, school board or other officials. They may act individually, or they may work together. By working together they gain more power. Government officials will usually pay more attention to a group than to a single person>on. When they work together, they are known as an interest group. They may be organized into a formal group with a charter and many members or an informal group with a few member-s. Anyone can be a member of an interest group, even people who are not citizens and are not eligible to vote.

An interest group is held together by the desire of its members to influence the government on a specific topic. If one does not already exist to deal with an issue, it can be easily started. All that is needed is a group of concerned individuals willing to act to influence public policy. The topics of their concern can vary widely. Some may seek more funds for schools, others less money for the military; still others may oppose the building of a large sign at a local shopping area. They can voice a concern, support or oppose suggested legislation or call for the removal of a public official

One interest group you've probably heard about is Mothers Against Drunk Driving, or MADD. Founded in 1980, MADD has a national office and many local chapters. Its purpose is to change laws to more severely punish individuals caught driving while intoxicated. Members of MADD voiced their opinions in letters, called public officials, appeared before governmental groups and used the press and television to promote their cause. Largely because of its actions, every state has tightened its drunk driving laws. The actions MADD took are typical of what interest groups do to influence policy makers.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

Members of D frequently appeared before public hearings and voiced their concerns and desires. Local, state and national governments regularly hold public hearings to give citizens an opportunity to express their opinions on issues. Hearings can be held on any topic. For example, Congress and state legislatures often have hearings to gather information about suggested legislation. The hearings allow interest groups to state how the legislation will affect them. These hearings also allow Congress to test whether public opinion favors the proposed legislation. On the local level, city governments encourage citizens to attend city council meetings and express their opinions.

Interest groups speaking at public hearings usually do what Monica did. They research their position and prepare carefully worded statements that argue their position. These statements are read at the public hearing. Heated debates sometimes result since individuals and interest groups frequently do not agree and voice different opinions.

Rules have been created to keep the public hearing orderly. Though each public hearing has its own rules, they are usually similar to the following:

- Statements may be given by any person in attendance at the meeting.
- Testimony is limited in length with a short time allowed for follow-up questions from the board holding the hearing.
- Each person testifying must wait until he or she is called upon to speak.
- The board holding the public hearing is only taking input on the L-sue and is not required to make a recommendation at the end of the hearing.

Government officials listen carefully to all the statements, but they do not have to take the advice of any of the speakers. They must make their own decision.

Public hearings are an important part of how a democracy works. They provide a forum for citizens to use their freedom of speech to express themselves to their elected representatives and to participate in making the decisions that affect their lives.

Questions:

1. How have you influenced rules that affect your life?

2. Name three ways people can participate in a democratic government.

3. What is a public hearing?

4. Why are public hearings important in a democracy?

5. Brainstorm examples of different kinds of public hearing that that might take place on the following issues:

    - Environmental
    - Utilities
    - Education
    - Health and Welfare
    - Defense
    - Family

Student Handout 2-B
Summary of Positions:
Jets over the School Yard

Name_____

Class_____

THE DILEMMA

The only middle school in the City of Megalopolis is the Megalopolis Middle School. This school unfortunately is located only one mile from the Megalopolis Regional Airport. This airport had been closed for ten years but 18 months ago; it was revived and reopened.

Each and every day students at the Megalopolis Middle School hear the loud noises of the many jets that take off and land at this nearby airport. Although the airport is a mile away, Students often comp of the noise pollution. Some students joke that their school is on the "runway." One of the algebra teachers, Ms. Quigley, and her students did a one-month study of the amount of jet noise. They discovered on an average school day there was 175 minutes or almost 3 hours of disruptive airport noise heard by the students.

Students, faculty, and parents have called and written letters to the Megalopolis City Council, the local airport authority, and their county, state, and national representatives. As Megalopolis Regional Airport continues to grow, .he noise problem seems to get worse. No one really wants to take responsibility for the problem- A *public hearing* (a special meeting held to receive sworn testimony on a case) has been scheduled by the Megalopolis City Council to take testimony on the issues. The Council does not have legal control over the way the airport operates. But the Council can make recommendations to other agencies, such as the local airport authority. The four groups who plan to testify at the public hearing are:

- Megalopolis Citizens For A Clean Environment
- Megalopolis Regional Airport Authority
- Megalopolis Economic Development Association
- Megalopolis Middle School Association

SUMMARY OF THE POSITIONS

1. **Megalopolis Citizens for a Clean Environment.** We will sue the City Council and the Megalopolis Regional Airport Authority if action is not taken immediately. We want a quiet community without the pollution of the airport.

2. **Megalopolis Regional Airport Authority.** We are doing everything in our power to alleviate this problem. We are monitoring noise levels continuously at the school, trying to schedule flights more efficiently, and have asked the airlines to use newer jets with quieter engines. We are willing to work with all parties involved to solve this problem.

3. **Megalopolis Economic Development Association.** The economic potential of the land

Megalopolis Middle School is built on is unlimited. We recommend that the school be moved so that light industry and airport related services can expand in our city.

4. **Megalopolis Middle School Association.** (a group represented by parents, students and teachers)

YOUR TASKS BEFORE THE MEGALOPOLIS CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC HEARING

Now that you have read the three different positions on the airport issues and discussed the dilemma for students, you have two tasks:

TASK ONE:

Decide what you think should be the position of the Megalopolis Middle School Association and write it above in the space provided. This association consists of teachers, parents and students.

TASK TWO:

Choose the position among the four you most favor. After selecting a position, use the questions on Part 2 of this handout *(What Do You think?)* to help you prepare written arguments in support of the position you have taken. Also, be prepared to share your arguments orally in a *class public hearing.*

Student Handout 2-B, Part 2
What Do You Think?

Name_____

Class_____

POSITION EVALUATION QUESTIONS

1) Which of the four positions did you select? Why did you select that position?

2) What are two strengths of the position you have selected?

3) What are two weaknesses of the position you have selected?

4) What might you say that would convince others that your position is the right one?

Student Handout 2-C
The Public Hearing

Name_____

Class_____

DEFINITION OF PUBLIC HEARING

A special meeting held to receive testimony on a case.

PUBLIC HEARING PROCEDURE
for the hearing on the Megalopolis Regional Airport

Statements may be given by any person in attendance at the meeting within designated time parameters, but no more than three people can speak to one position.

Testimony is limited to four minutes in length with one minute allowed for follow-up questions by the president of the Megalopolis City Council or members of the Council

Each person testifying must wait until he or she is called upon by the City Council president.

The City Council president and/or members at this meeting are only taking input on the airport issues and are not obligated to make a recommendation at this time.

Student Handout 2-D
Role of Megalopolis City Council President and City Council Members

Name_____

Class_____

PUBLIC HEARING RULES

1) The City Council president will moderate the meeting.

2) Testimony is limited to four minutes. Time is allowed at the end of all testimony for follow-up questions by the City Council president or members.

3) No more than three people can speak to one position.

4) The City Council president and/or members may react to the testimony heard at the conclusion of the meeting but are not obligated to make any recommendation at this time.

PROCEDURES FOR THE CHAIRPERSON

1) Tell participants the purpose of today's hearing and review public hearing procedures found in Student Handout 2-B (The *Public Hearing).*

2) Take testimony from three parties on each of the following group positions. (You may keep track of who speaks using the blank space below.

a) Megalopolis Citizens for a Clean Environment

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

b) Megalopolis Regional Airport Authority

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

c) Megalopolis Economic Development Association

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

d) Megalopolis Middle School Association

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

3) Time should be allowed for the City Council president and members to react to the testimony they have heard once all statements have been completed.

4) Thank each participant for giving testimony and also thank the audience for sharing in this important public hearing process.